

2014 CLICK IT OR TICKET “Border to Border”

Dover, DE- As motorists take to the roads this Memorial Day holiday, law enforcement officers from Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania will be out in full force, taking part in the 2014 national *Click It or Ticket* seat belt enforcement mobilization and cracking down on motorists who are not belted.

Today, May 19th, officers from Delaware State Police, Delaware River and Bay Authority, Maryland State Police, New Jersey, Pennsylvania State Police, Selbyville PD, and Worcester County Sheriff's Department will be teaming up and joining forces to mobilize the *Click It or Ticket* (CIOT) “Border to Border” enforcement operation from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Agencies will be providing increased seat belt enforcement at border sites sending a ‘zero tolerance’ message to the public: Driving or riding unbuckled will result in a ticket, no matter what State. A total of eleven states are participating along the northeast including Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia.

“Seat belts save thousands of lives every year, but far too many motorists are still not buckling up, especially at night when the risk of getting in a crash is even greater,” said Colonel Richard Arroyo of the Delaware River and Bay Authority police department. “We want to make this the safest summer possible. Buckling up is not optional; it’s the difference between life and death in a crash. That’s why we’re out here enforcing the law. Click it or Ticket, every time, day or night.”

At a press event held earlier today at the Delaware Memorial Bridge to announce the Border to Border enforcement operation,

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) representatives from Region 2 (PA, NJ), Region 3 (DE, MD), and a crash survivor stressed the Click It or Ticket campaign message to buckle up day and night.

NHTSA Region 2 Administrator, Tom Louizou focused on drivers most at risk across the nation, "Our younger motorists—young men in particular—are most at risk. 62 percent of those killed in crashes were NOT buckled up—the highest percentage of any age group", said Louizou.

Elizabeth A. Baker, Ph.D, NHTSA Region 3 Administrator commented on when most unbelted crashes happen. "Most law-abiding citizens have gotten the message to buckle up. But the same is not true for nighttime drivers and passengers", said Baker. "Of those killed in nighttime crashes in 2012, 62% – two out of three – were not wearing their seat belts."

Firsthand experience of what could happen to a person when involved in a unbelted crash was shared by Chris Weersing of Pennsylvania. Chris was driving with a friend and involved in a single vehicle crash in 2005. The friend was wearing a seat belt and hit his head on the windshield, Chris was not wearing his seat belt and his head hit a tree. His friend walked away with a minor concussion, Chris was in a coma and not expected to recover. Today Chris lives with the effects and injuries of an unbelted crash including traumatic brain injury, memory loss, and having to re-learn daily living activities.

Delaware is seeing a decrease in unbelted fatalities compared to this time last year. At this time last year 56% of the fatal vehicle occupants were not wearing seat belts compared to 42% currently. There have been a total of 33 vehicle occupants killed in a fatal crash this year in Delaware. Delaware's seat belt use rate is 92% compared to the national seat belt use rate of 86%.

Delaware law requires drivers and *all* passengers, including those in the back seat, to wear a seat belt. An officer can pull over a driver if he sees any person in the vehicle not wearing a seat belt, even if there is no other violation. The ticket, which goes to the driver no matter who is unbuckled in the vehicle, totals \$83.50.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 52 percent of the 21,253 passenger vehicle occupants killed in 2011 were not wearing their seat belts at the time of the crash. And unbelted fatalities are more prevalent at night than during the daytime. According to NHTSA, 62 percent of the 10,135 passenger vehicle occupants killed in 2011 during the overnight hours of 6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m. were not wearing their seat belts at the time of the crash.

In 2011, seat belts saved an estimated **11,949** lives nationwide according to NHTSA. While this year's *Click It or Ticket* enforcement mobilization runs from May 20 through June 2, officers are out enforcing seat belt laws year-round.

For more on the national Click It or Ticket mobilization, please visit www.nhtsa.gov or for Delaware information please visit www.buckleupde.org. For pictures of the Border to Border press event please visit www.facebook.com/ArriveAliveDE

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